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ABSTRACT

A practicum was undertaken to improve second language acquisition and critical thinking skills in a fourth and fifth grade English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class in a Spanish-speaking low socioeconomic neighborhood. Students there were not exposed to English except during school hours, and they were taking 4 or 5 years to become bilingual, instead of the usual 3 years. With parent cooperation, students were assigned to watch selected television programs and commercials in English as part of their homework. Results of the County's Aural Comprehension Test and the Michigan Oral Language Test indicate that the students were able to analyze and compare television ads effectively, and that more than 80% of the target population increased their language and critical thinking skills by at least 20%. It is suggested that this technique could also be used with older students in a high school setting. Appended are a letter to parents explaining the project, a sample sequence chain in which students described what happened in a television program, a student assignment called "Guess Which Program," and other activities including descriptive writing about Ninja turtles, a compare and contrast exercise, and a Venn diagram exercise. Contains 12 references. (LB)

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INCREASING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE ESOL STUDENTS THROUGH TELEVISION ADS AND PROGRAMS

by
Ofelia Stephens

A Practicum Report
Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for
the Advancement of Education of Nova University in
Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

November 8, 1991

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Abstract

Increasing English Language Skills for Fourth and Fifth Grade ESOL Students through television Adds and Programs

Stephens, Ofelia, 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University The Center for the Advancement of Education

Descriptors: Elementary Education / ESOL / Critical Thinking Skills / Commercial Television / Television Commercials / Listening Comprehension / Student Motivation

The purpose of this practicum was to improve second language acquisition and critical thinking skills in a fourth and fifth grade ESOL class. The school is located in a Spanish-speaking low socio-economic neighborhood. Students were taking four or five years to become bilingual, instead of three. Participants were not exposed to English except during school hours. Parents were requested to deprive themselves of viewing their favorite English speaking channels. Students watched programs from different time slots and were exposed to different kinds of commercials. They were able to analyze and compare TV adds effectively. The County's Aural and the Michigan Oral tests were used to pretest and posttest the participants. The final evaluation demonstrated that more than 80 percent of the target population increased their ESOL and critical thinking skills by at least 20 percent.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed: Julia Stephens
Student's name

CHAPTER I

Purpose

One of the main objectives of the school where this practicum was implemented is to teach English to students coming from other countries. The school district, with its continuous influx of immigrants, faces the challenge of educating foreign students who do not speak English. This is accomplished with the help of the bilingual program.

In order to achieve this goal, special classes are provided. Students receive English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) Classes, as well as curriculum content and language arts in their home language. Since proficiency in English is essential for finishing school and getting a good education, parents do not have a choice as to whether their children receive ESOL classes or not. This is the only component of the bilingual education program that is mandatory.

The implementation of this proposal took place in a bilingual school with a large ESOL population. The administrators run the school with the help of the Cadre, teachers elected by their peers under the School Based Management Program. Based on input received from different committees, this group makes decisions that affect most of the staff and students of the center.

Almost half of the students at this elementary school receive some kind of ESOL instruction. These classes may be in the form of "pull-out" or "self-contained." In the pull-out program a special teacher takes the students out of their regular classroom for one or two hours a day to give them special instruction in English. In an ESOL self-contained class, all students are of limited English proficiency (LEP) and receive ESOL instruction from the regular

classroom teacher. At times, two grade levels are combined to form a self-contained class.

The teacher implementing this project had a fourth and fifth grade ESOL I and II combination class. The teacher was responsible for ESOL I, content area, Math and language arts. Science, Health and Social Studies were taught in Spanish and English (using ESOL techniques). The instructor also taught Math bilingually and language arts in Spanish.

The school follows a diagnostic prescriptive approach in Math and Reading. A balanced curriculum is offered to the students in both English and Spanish. Children who are not fluent in Spanish learn it as a second language. In addition to these bilingual classes, some third, fourth, and fifth grade students participate in a Dual Accreditation language program, and upon completion of the required courses are accredited in Spain by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Students who need extra help in basic skills are serviced by the Chapter I program. Additional assistance is offered to them in Math and Reading. When children are diagnosed as having learning problems, they attend special education classes. Those with high intellectual ability go to the Bilingual Gifted Program twice a week.

The population of the school reflects the ethnic composition of the community: 880 students are Hispanics, 50 White, 12 Black, and seven Asians. Most of the students belong to a low socio-economic group. Their parents have low paying jobs or are unemployed and single parent households are very common. The total school population is 960 students: 541 receive free lunch and 88 pay reduced price.

Problem Statement

The target group for the implementation of this practicum was a fourth and fifth grade ESOL I and II combination. All students in the classroom participated

in the research. The class was self-contained and received ESOL I instruction, Math, content area in Spanish and English, and language arts in the home language from the teacher who implemented this practicum project. ESOL II students were pulled-out by a special teacher for language arts in English. While these students were out of the classroom, the remaining did oral drills. These tasks included repetition and substitution exercises, as well as learning basic vocabulary words.

Two fourth graders from this class received extra help daily for one hour from Chapter I aides. In the morning the students practiced reading, and in the afternoon they worked on math problems. These skills were reinforced in the computer lab, where they went twice a week for half-hour sessions.

Students at this school feel no need to communicate in English outside their classrooms. Their community is mostly Spanish speaking and after school they watch Spanish television stations. They have no exposure to English. E. Martin, as cited by Michael Long, reported:

> ". . . of a study in which 166 adults (83 pairs matched on Michigan pre-test scores) received 22.5 hours of ESOL instruction per week for fourteen weeks, during which time half the students lived with other non-native speakers in university dormitories (less exposure) and the other half with American families in a "homestay" program (more exposure). The post-test consisted of scores on the TOEFL and class grades. Results showed that the homestay (more exposure) students scored significantly higher on the TOEFL and on all other tests." (Long, 1983: 370)

Lack of improvement in ESOL could be attributed to the fact that:

> "From the child's point of view the desire to communicate is one of the strongest motivations for learning a language. For this reason, there should be as much opportunity for inter-pupil communication as possible. Bilingual programs which assign English-speaking children to one classroom and non-English-speaking children to another are failing to utilize one of the most powerful psychological factors in language learning." (Saville and Troike, 1980: 19)

The same authors reinforced this view by stating that "A bilingual program has a much better chance for success if the children need both languages to communicate in or out of school and have a continuous exposure to them." (Saville and Troike, 1980: 21) This is not the case at this school. The target population is not exposed to English outside their classroom.

Children learning English are expected to exit the ESOL program in three years. But the county's Active Student ESOL Level and ESOL Semester Enrolled list shows otherwise. At the end of the 1989-1990 school year, of the 88 students finishing their sixth semester, 57 were still levels II and III. Out of 19 children completing their fourth year (eight semester) in ESOL, six were level III, 10 were level IV and three were still in level II. Students at this elementary school are taking longer than three years to become bilingual.

Outcome Objectives

Prior to the implementation of this practicum, students took the County Test of Language Development (receptive) and the Michigan Oral Language Series (ESOL) tests. The first one is answered by choosing a picture out of three possible choices. The test is designed to measure comprehension and does not evaluate the ability to communicate orally. The second measures the oral skills of the students.

At the same time, the students were given a teacher-made test to measure their critical thinking skills. They were required to perceive cause and effect relationships, analyze situations and make inferences. Because of the difficulty that these children have with English, answers in Spanish were accepted to measure their higher thinking skills more accurately.

After 12 weeks of implementation, the students took the County Test for Language Development and the Michigan Oral Language Series (ESOL) tests again. At least 80 percent of the class was expected to show an improvement of 20 percent or higher in the acquisition of English. Upon completion of the ESOL

posttests, the students were given the teacher-made critical thinking skills tests. An improvement of 20 percent or higher was anticipated.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategies

Almost four million Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students are receiving ESOL classes in the United States. For some educators, the best way children learn English is to place them in a regular classroom, where they will have constant exposure to natural communication situations. In this kind of setting, students will also be motivated to learn the new language in order to participate in games with their peers.

Some researchers see the submersion approach as a mistake, claiming that if it is true that students are constantly exposed to the target language, they cannot comprehend what is said most of the time, and therefore do not benefit from the exposure. "According to research in second language acquisition, it is thought that acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language. Incomprehensible input (. . .) does not seem to help (. . .) Many students who are successful in submersion settings receive extra tutoring and private lessons at the end of the day." (Krashens and Terrell, 1983: 19)

For some experts, a bilingual program is the answer to educating foreign students, even though children are less exposed to natural communication in English. But there is also the possibility, as suggested by the Ohio State Department of Education, that "teachers might have lower expectations of students in a bilingual program." (Ohio, 1985) Taking into consideration that

> "The lack of English-speaking peers in the classroom limits the amount of relevant input that language minority students can receive from ESOL classes; and that if audio (. . .) resources are not used in the classroom the students have access to only one source of language input - the instructor." (Ohio, 1985)

it is easy to see that the acquisition of English can be a long process for students in a self-contained setting.

The importance of interacting with children with native or near-native fluency cannot be stressed enough. In research reported by Amato (1988: 28) Selinker, Swain, and Dumas found that although the students in French immersion gained proficiency, their speech contained pidginized forms which may have been due to heir lack of sufficient interaction with peers and others who were native speakers of French. "Plann discovered the same tendency towards the development of pidginized forms in the Spanish immersion program. In fact, he found that the students appeared to have developed their own classroom dialect. It is likely that in both situations the students did not have sufficient opportunities for interaction with native or near-native linguistic models."

While some authors, like Saville and Troike, see the benefits of integrating students of different skills in the same room, other researchers feel that the opposite is true. Charles Nevei (1987: 24) said that "Tracking is not an attempt to create differences, but to accommodate them (. . .) Treating all students the same is not a formula for equality or excellence."

Several studies see a relationship between the ability to learn ESOL and proficiency in the first language. "(. . .) Academic proficiency in one's mother tongue seems to play a very important role in predicting students' success in FLL." (Olshtain, 1990: 39) Stephen Krashen (1982: 58) maintained that "Background learned in the native language makes English more comprehensive and thus facilitates its acquisition." Research done in Israel showed that:

> "(. . .) ability to correct errors in Hebrew emerged as one of the subtests that made the greatest contributions and differentiated best between disadvantaged and regular students. The same subtest also contributed most to the prediction of success in EFL, for both groups of students (. . .) The disadvantaged students found it very difficult to identify inappropriate usage and then suggest some corrections." (Olshtain, 1990: 39)

Still other researchers correlate the age that the LEP students are first introduced to English to their success in mastering it. The Krashen, Long and Scarella research, as reported by M.H. Long (1990) claimed that "starting after age six appears to make it impossible for many learners (and after age 12 for the remainder) to achieve native-like competence in phonology." The available data, according to this study, suggests that exposure to a second language needs to occur before age six to guarantee that the phonology of the target language becomes native-like.

Jennie M. Celona (1983: 42-55), from Massachusetts State College, interviewed 25 foreign students and found that the greater the student's desire, the better she/he learned a language." Professor Celona also found that "constant, intensive exposure to a language is one of the best ways to learn it."

Krahnke, Candlin, Murphy, and Johnson developed a method for teaching ESOL and critical thinking skills centered around the task-based syllabus. It is similar to the Language-Experience Approach of the Chapter I Program in the late eighties. Krahnke claims that:

> "Another characteristic of tasks is that they require the student to apply cognitive processes of evaluation, selection, combination, modification, or supplementation (so called 'higher order thinking skills') to a combination of new and old information." (Krahnke, 1988: 57)

Some researchers reported excellent results by using television as a teaching tool for developing critical thinking skills by integrating it with

> "analysis of newscasts in units of language (. . .) discussion of documentaries and commercials in units of critical thinking. It also makes students more aware of the kinds of programming television offers and the way they function. While the assignment thus provide various ways of mitigating the influence of television, it fosters, at the same time, the skills of critical thinking." (Maxwell, 1982: 12)

According to Nielsen statistics, by the time a student graduates from high school, he or she would have spent more time in front of the television set than

at school. These youngsters received not only messages from the programs, but commercials would have been trying to influence them into buying their products. Dr. Kenneth Jurkieviez, as cited by Rhoda Maxwell (1982: 12) pointed out that:

> "Making students aware of how audiences are appealed to is obviously important to their development as communicators as well as consumers of both messages and products. We need to help students critically examine the ways in which the tastes, values, fears, and attitudes of various consumer groups are expressed, manipulated, or exploited in commercials."

One way students can be helped is by developing their critical thinking skills.

Television can also be used advantageously by the LEP students. Some researchers quoted in News and Trends (Nov. 1990: 3) thought that for this approach to work, television programs must be closed-captioned, "because close-captioning simultaneously allows viewers to see the image, hear the narration and read the written word in proper sentence form, it is perfect for foreign-language speakers."

Studies conducted in Lowell, Massachusetts, where 25 percent of the families are of Asian origin, showed the advantage of using closed-captioned television for ESOL students. According to News and Trends magazine (Nov. 1990: 3), Professor Susan Numan was commissioned by the National Captioning Institute to research the effect of closed-captioned television on LEP students. One hundred and twenty-nine eighth graders of Asian and Hispanic background were chosen at random to participate in the study. They were divided into four different groups, and met twice a week for a 12-week period. While one group watched closed- captioned television, another group viewed non-captioned television. A third group read and listened to a tape and the fourth group read. "In all cases, the highest scores were snagged by those who had viewed the closed-captioned television." (News and Trends, Nov. 1991)

However, since the study was commissioned by the National Captioned Institute, there is the possibility that is biased. If students do not know English, seeing it written is not going to be of any significance for them. An not all advanced ESOL students will be able to profit from closed-captioned television either. Students who possess efficient reading strategies in their first language, but failed to develop them in the second, will not benefit from the sub-titles. "Problems in reading a second language will also be encountered by those students who never developed efficient reading skills in their first language." (Krashen and Terrel, 1993)

There are many reasons why students do poorly in ESOL. The target group of this practicum belongs to a low socio-economic group in a Spanish speaking community. Some of these children had very little schooling and did not develop good skills in their first language. The only exposure to English that they received was in their ESOL I and II self-contained classroom, where they did not even benefit from the input of English-speaking children.

Most of the students in this class were not motivated to learn English in order to communicate with their peers or with other members of their community. None of these factors could be changed, but it was expected that by watching English channels, at least half an hour a day, their vocabulary, comprehension, and communication skills would improve. It was also expected that by analyzing commercials the students would not only develop more sophisticated higher thinking skills, but would also become discriminating consumers.

CHAPTER III
Methods

For the implementation of this practicum project, the instructor requested the cooperation and support of the parents. Some deprived themselves of viewing their favorite television programs in order to allow their children to watch the English speaking channels. A letter was sent home explaining the purpose of these new assignments, and parents were asked to sign a permission slip (Appendix A) for their children to participate.

Prior to the beginning of the implementation period, students were given a pretest. The class was tested during study period, so that no time was taken from instruction. Testing took place on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 11:30 to 12:00 p.m., and lasted less than two weeks. The County Aural Comprehension Test was given to the whole class at the same time. The Michigan Oral Test was given individually to each child. Once the outcome of these evaluations was recorded, implementation started.

Every Monday, students were given a schedule of the programs they were required to watch during the week. Some of these programs, especially the ones from Channels 2 and 10 were closed-captioned, but that was not a decisive factor in choosing a program. More attention was focused in selecting shows from different time slots, to expose students to diverse kinds of commercials. This enabled them to compare and analyze advertisements effectively.

On Mondays, participants returned the old schedules signed by their parents. The signature verified that the child viewed the programs assigned. This was repeated every week during the implementation of the practicum.

The day following the assignment of the first program, the class started the drills and discussions. Each daily session lasted about 25 minutes. However, some took longer, depending on the children's enthusiasm or level of difficulty; others were cut short or abandoned.

At the beginning of each week the class was given, together with their television schedule, their spelling words. Whenever possible, a whole language approach was implemented. Handwriting, Spelling, language arts and Math were integrated to reinforce the newly learned vocabulary and structures.

For the first week of implementation, the participants watched different TV shows, like Alf, Bill Cosby, Hogan Family, Wheel of Fortune, etc. This no only provided students with variation, but also gave the teacher important feedback as to which shows the students enjoyed watching. The class was divided in its opinions.

Teacher made dittos, as well as commercial materials, were used to enhance these activities. Materials given to teachers during workshops of the county schools were also used. Some had to be modified to suit the objectives of the activities, and the critical thinking skills questions.

The first session started with a question from the teacher, "What program did you watch yesterday on TV?" A student was called to reply with a complete sentence. An acceptable answer, for example, was: "I watched the Bill Cosby Show last night." This reply was the basis for an oral substitution drill.

For newcomers, the substitution drill was a learning experience; for the ESOL II's, it was a warm-up exercise or review. An example of the substitution drill that was used is:

I watched The Bill Cosby Show last night.
He watched the Bill Cosby Show last night.
My music teacher watched The Bill Cosby Show last night.
My parents watched The Bill Cosby Show last night.
or:

I watched Channel 7 last night.
I watched The Simpsons last night.
or:
I watched the Bill Cosby Show. I didn't watch CNN.
I didn't watch The Bill Cosby Show. I watched CNN.

During the first week, all the class did was oral exercises and games. After the students repeated as a whole, small groups were called to participate. Later, individual students took turns asking each other questions like, "What did you watch las night? What did your sister (your brother, father, etc.) watch last night?", or "Did you watch The Simpsons last night?"

On Friday the class voted for their favorite program and the results were recorded on the board by the instructor. This activity provided important feedback as to which shows should be reassigned. The next task integrated the ESOL and Math objectives by assigning a group of participants to draw a pictograph on construction paper illustrating the results of the elections.

For critical thinking skills the class watched a tape containing five commercials aimed at young audiences. Students answered questions like, "Who would like this commercial?, You?, Your grandmother?," etc. They were asked to pay attention to the background music, the actors, the vocabulary used, what kind of clothes the performers were wearing. Later in the week, the class was shown a video containing commercials and the students had to identify the ones aimed at young people.

The second week the students had the opportunity to watch "The Wizard of Oz." Two or three days after watching it, they were still asking questions about its characters and plot, and wanted to talk about it. The first minutes of the sessions, as during the first week, were spent in oral drills. The teacher started talking about the beginning of the program and asked, "What happened first? What happened next?" The answers were recorded on the board by the instructor. After practicing reading the sentences, students wrote the events of

the show in a sequence chain ditto (Appendix B). On Friday the class took a spelling test with the vocabulary words learned. After voting again for their favorite program, students at one center worked on making a bar graph showing the results.

To help students identify who the TV commercials were aimed at, they were shown a video containing advertisement directed at adults. The class was asked to listen to the music, and to watch the age of the actors, what they were wearing, and how they talked. Later the class viewed 10 commercials chosen at random and they had to identify the group targeted.

During the third week of implementation, the class watched "Alf" two or three times. Sessions were started with oral drills and questions and answers about the programs watched. After answering questions like "What happened next?", the ESOL II students received a sequence chain ditto and wrote down the events of the show in order. They read their papers aloud and the teacher recorded the sentences on the board. After practicing reading, the ESOL I students filled out their dittos. These sentences were later used by the class for language arts, to find subjects, predicates, nouns, and verbs.

On Thursday, the students took home for the first time a "Guess What Program" ditto. Most of the class was able to participate in this activity. Students wrote three things that happened in a program. On Friday they took turns reading their sentences for the rest of the class to guess what program they wrote about. This task was repeated every Friday until the end of the implementation period (Appendix C). After identifying the programs, the class voted one more time to select their favorite shows for the week. Some students made a line graph on construction paper to record the answers.

For critical thinking skills, the class kept identifying the different groups targeted by commercials. They were able to identify adds aimed at young people, adults, men, and women, as well as commercials aimed at attracting minorities.

On Friday each student illustrated two commercials of the same product, one aimed at adults and the other aimed at children.

Because in our country ten children a day are killed by guns, and more than 100 are seriously injured, the next three weeks dealt with subjects like anger, violence (in real life and on television) and playing with guns. During the fourth week of implementation the students watched police action programs and viewed a tape where the instructor had previously recorded excerpts form newscasts about youngsters being killed or hurt by guns. After the regular warm-up drills of repetition and questions and answers, the class practiced the statements suggested by "Kids and Guns: a Deadly Equation" (. . . County Public Schools, 1990 pp. 5-11). Some sentences like the gun safety pledge, "Tell my friend to put the gun down. Get away from the gun. Tell a trusted adult where the gun is.", were drilled and written for handwriting practice. On Friday, the Spelling test consisted of words selected from the newly learned vocabulary.

This week most of the discussions for critical thinking skills took place during the Spanish Social Studies time. The students were able to distinguish the difference between violence portrayed in TV shows, commercials and video games and the effect of guns and violence in real life situations. As a follow-up, the participants had to share their conclusions with a younger friend or relative.

During the fifth week the class watched People's Court every day. They were pleasantly surprised to see that they could understand most of the dialogues. After drilling and discussing the cases in English, during the Spanish class the students were asked if they agreed with the judge's decisions. They were asked to give reasons for their answers.

For critical thinking the class was involved in discussing anger. On Monday, a list of causes of anger was recorded on the board. Tuesday, one group named healthy reactions to anger. On Wednesday, another group enumerated unhealthy reactions to anger. Thursday and Friday sessions were

spent examining the possible consequences of anger. Statements used by Kids and Guns (p. 20) such as "Control of my responses is my responsibility" were translated, drilled in English, read, and copied for handwriting.

The programs viewed during the sixth week were chosen by the participants. On Monday the class selected to watch Alf, The Bill Cosby Show, Hunter, People's Court and Hogan Family. Every session started with oral drills, reviewing all structures and skills practiced during the implementation period. Most students were able to write a sequence of events from the program viewed the day before. During study period, the students watched pre-taped commercials and the majority was able to identify how the adds were trying to influence the different target groups.

Return of the Jedi, assigned on Tuesday of the seventh week, held the students' attention until Friday. Most of the participants had watched Stars Wars on a Spanish station and were very interested with its sequence, although they had trouble understanding segments of the picture and following the dialogues. The film lasted more than two hours and was frequently interrupted by commercials. The students were able to observe how, during different time slots, commercials changed and after 10 o'clock they were aimed at an older audience. During the critical thinking skills time, the class classified events in the picture as reality or fantasy. A bright student remarked that today's reality was considered fiction a hundred years ago.

The following week the participants watched the premiere of Dinosaurs. This new series takes place millions of years ago, and the reptiles act, speak, dress, and have the same problems people have today. The students did oral drills and a sequence ditto. They played in small groups the game "Dinosaurs and Prehistoric Lotto" (Le Trend Enterprises, Inc.). For language arts they wrote a short paragraph with one topic and four detail sentences. During Math the class

had a "spelling" practice using numbers instead of words. The students played a teacher-and-student made bingo with numbers in the millions.

To promote critical thinking skills the teacher reminded the class of the ending of the film Dinosaurs, when one of the main characters looks out the window at two cavemen, laughs at them and says, "Dinosaurs will always be the masters of the world." Some students mentioned changes they had witnessed. When the teacher asked, "Did Dinosaurs and men live on earth at the same time?", the students gave an affirmative answer. Two children were asked to go to the library and research about the exact times when dinosaurs disappeared and humans emerged.

The class watched mostly documentaries and programs from the National Geographic Institute during the ninth week. Students practiced oral drills about animals. The instructor used the Peabody kit to provide a wider range of examples and enhance the students' vocabulary. The characteristics of mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians were reviewed during Science. Animal cards were named and classified into the four groups. The students watched "Swimming with the Whales" and learned that the largest animal on earth is the blue whale. Oral drills were done comparing the different degrees of the adjectives. Individual students were called to ask their classmates questions such as "Which animal is smaller, (and show the corresponding Peabody cards) the elephant or the tiger? Which animal is larger, the gorilla or the cat?"

During the "animal week" students learned the names of baby animals. They were able to match words like cat and kitten, bear and cub, cow and calf, etc. They also learned that a female whale is a cow. On Friday the class had a spelling test composed of 20 words chosen from the new vocabulary.

The participants also had an activity called "It's O.K. to be different." The class was divided into different groups and they had to provide examples of "being different." Some of the answers given were: flying fish, flying

mammals, mammals shaped like fish and living in the water, and mammals laying eggs.

On Monday of the following week, the class was divided into five heterogeneous groups. They were given time each day to get together and produce their own commercials on Friday. The students were allowed to speak softly among themselves. They could advertise any product they wanted or make up their own. On Friday they had to describe their commercials to the class, explaining how the actors would speak, dress, and the background music used, etc. One group performed the commercial and received extra credit.

The class requested to watch "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle" cartoons for the last three weeks of implementation. The sessions started with warm-up drills, as well as questions and answers, about the programs. Characteristics about the four Turtles were drilled by the whole class and then by smaller groups and individuals. The short sentences describing the Turtles were recorded on the board without following any particular kind of order. The students practiced choral and individual reading. Later they were given a ditto to classify the sentences as describing Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo or Donatello (Appendix D).

On Friday the class voted for their favorite Turtle. The votes were recorded on the board and the results were expressed in fractions and rations. During the Spanish Social Studies period, the students saw samples of the art work done by the artists after whom the Ninjas were named.

The class watched traditional market commercials during this week. For example, young mothers buying Pampers or housewives praising Mr. Clean. The participants recognized that for years these two groups have been consumers of disposable diapers and cleaners, and that these adds were targeting traditional costumers. After the class was aware of these facts, students compared customary adds to the ones creating a new market. Examples of this kind were

men using purses, ladies giving their boyfriends champagne, and older men and women jogging while wearing athletic sneakers. This represented another way for the students to analyze commercials, by classifying them into traditional or new market.

During the eleventh week, the students continued watching the Ninja Turtles cartoons. The class had an adequate amount of oral drills and played a guessing game. One participant would say, for example, "He has a mask" an another would identify the character as Cassey Jones.

As follow-up to this activity, the class read previous dittos done by them classifying the traits of the Turtles. After a short review the students were able to use Venn diagrams to compare the similarities and differences of their favorite Ninjas. If a participant wanted to include April O'Neal, the Frog, or any other character from the show, that was considered acceptable. (Appendix E)

During this week, the critical thinking skills activities were directed at analyzing traditional and new market commercials. On Friday the class was divided into different groups and each group produced two adds: one aimed at a traditional target and the other directed to a new market. When the projects were finished, they were presented to the class and the students classified them. Towards the end of the 12 weeks of implementation, the class reviewed the parts of speech and wrote cinquains about their favorite Turtles. As a follow-up activity, students took turns reading the poems to the class while their classmates identified which Turtles the cinquains were describing. Some students chose to write about the Master, the Alligator, or another character. (Appendix F)

The critical thinking skills sessions ended by watching two commercials. The class had to identify their similarities and differences, applying what they had learned about advertisements. Later in the week, the students wrote a comparison of the two adds using Venn diagrams. (Appendix G)

CHAPTER IV

Results

The two ESOL tests administered to the students as pretests at the beginning of the implementation period and as posttests at the end, were very different in form and purpose. While the County's Aural Comprehension Test is receptive, the Michigan Oral Language Test is productive. The first one measures comprehension and the second evaluates oral communication.

Older students can take the Aural Comprehension at the same time. One of the vantages of this test is that the whole class can be evaluated in 25 minutes. The test measured how well the participants could discriminate different items of pronunciation, plurals, comparisons, pronouns, double negatives, present progressive, affirmative and negative, and the ability to contrast "going to" to future, past and present progressive.

This test consists of 22 items. Each question has three possible answers in the form of pictures for students of select the right one. Answers are either right or wrong, and each one is worth one point. There is no partial credit for any reply.

The Michigan Oral Language Productive Test that was used is a simplified version, adapted by the Department of Bilingual Programs. Changes made to the Michigan test reduced scoring to zero or one for each of the 43 items. The objective is to assess the student's ability to produce standard grammatical and phonological features when they speak. The disadvantage of this test is that it must be given to the class on an individual basis. It takes an average of 15 minutes per student.

The instructions for giving this test are extremely detailed. The stimulus must be given to the subject being tested exactly the way it is indicated in the manual. The questions are structured so that the responses contain a particular feature of grammar or pronunciation. Examples of possible incorrect answers are given for each question, and the correct response or responses appear underlined.

Since the Michigan test is productive and the County test is receptive, they complemented each other, and provided and accurate measure of the improvement, or lack of improvement of the students in ESOL. These two tests were given to the students at the beginning and at the end of the implementation period of this practicum. The critical thinking test was also used as a pretest and posttest.

The teacher-made critical thinking test consisted of 20 items, but students could score up to 26 points, since two of the questions were worth three and four points respectively. Students had to find the differences and similarities between two flags, identify the population targeted by newspaper advertisements, and answer higher thinking skill questions. These questions included deductive reasoning, generalizations, and the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion and reality and fantasy. Some of the items in the test were open end questions, others, were multiple choice.

The duration of the implementation period was 12 weeks. At least 80 percent of the target population was expected to indicate an improvement of 20 percent or higher, in ESOL and critical thinking skills. That increase was used to determine the success or failure or the program.

The results of the County Aural Test final evaluation showed an average gain of 47 percent for the class. Two students improved their comprehension skills 100 percent, while another increased only 12 percent. Of the 23 students participating in the implementation of the practicum project, 21 (91 percent) demonstrated and increase of at least 20 percent in their receptive skills.

The results obtained from the Michigan Oral posttest also exceeded the improvement anticipated. The class showed an average gain of 58 percent. One fifth grade student improved in ESOL productive skills 250 percent, while another improved only five percent. The final evaluation demonstrated that 95 percent of the target population increased their communication skills by more than 20 percent. A possible reason for this increase could be that some students were going through the silent period of language acquisition when they were pretested.

The final evaluation of the critical thinking skills posttest also exceeded the gains anticipated. Eighty-seven percent of the target population improved their higher thinking skills by at least 40 percent. The average gain for the group was 34 percent.

The writer expected that the students who received A's in language arts in the home language would obtain the highest gains in ESOL and critical thinking skills, but these expectations were not achieved. The only two students who received D's in Spanish for Spanish Speakers (Spanish - S) improved their production in English by 250 and 100 percent, according to a comparison of the results obtained from the Michigan Oral pretest and posttest. This instrument indicated no improvement from two of the students who consistently received A's in Spanish.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Since the final evaluation indicated measurable gains in ESOL and critical thinking skills, the results of this practicum will be shared with the rest of the teachers and administrators at the school where it was implemented. A brief workshop will be offered during a faculty meeting. Coworkers will receive a summary of the outcome objectives as well as samples of the lesson plans and activities used during the implementation of this project. Tapes containing news and commercials will also be shared.

Copies of the handouts given at the workshop will be sent to bilingual departments at schools where the teacher implementing this proposal has previously worked. These centers have large ESOL populations and should benefit from the approaches suggested in this project. English speaking and LEP students could strengthen their critical thinking skills and become better educated consumers by analyzing commercials.

A senior high school in Flushing, New York, will also receive a summary about the results and application of this project. This school also has a large ESOL population, but its students come mostly from South Korea. The teacher who implemented this practicum project is confident that they, although older and from a different ethnic background, will be able to improve their ESOL and critical thinking skills.

Table I County Aural Test				
Student	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Gain**	**%**
A	7	11	4	57.14
B	0	8	8	-
C	5	8	3	60.00
D	11	16	5	45.45
E	12	15	3	25.00
1	12	14	2	16.66
2	8	9	1	12.50
3	4	8	4	100.00
4	7	10	3	42.85
5	8	15	7	87.50
6	11	16	5	45.45
7	12	16	4	33.33
8	11	15	4	36.36
9	13	15	2	15.38
10	6	12	6	100.00
11	8	11	3	37.50
12	10	15	5	50.00
13	7	13	6	85.71
14	8	15	7	87.50
15	14	17	3	21.42
16	13	17	4	30.76
17	10	16	6	60.00
18	10	14	4	40.00

Table II Michigan Oral Test				
Student	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Gain**	**%**
A	0	3	3	-
B	0	2	2	-
C	0	0	0	-
D	13	16	3	23.07
E	12	23	9	75.00
1	13	19	6	46.15
2	5	9	4	80.00
3	0	2	2	-
4	2	7	5	250.00
5	16	22	6	37.50
6	7	20	13	185.00
7	17	29	12	70.58
8	19	29	10	52.63
9	15	30	15	100.00
10	4	6	2	50.00
11	0	4	4	-
12	17	18	1	5.88
13	19	27	8	42.10
14	10	16	6	60.00
15	18	31	13	72.22
16	18	24	6	33.33
17	7	14	7	100.00
18	7	15	8	114.28

Table III Critical Thinking Test				
Student	**Pretest**	**Posttest**	**Gain**	**%**
A	16	18	2	12.50
B	16	24	8	50.00
C	18	22	4	22.22
D	8	13	5	62.50
E	13	15	2	15.38
1	15	22	7	46.66
2	17	23	6	35.29
3	7	14	7	100.00
4	16	22	6	37.50
5	15	15	0	0
6	16	20	4	25.00
7	18	21	3	16.66
8	14	21	7	50.00
9	19	23	4	21.05
10	17	24	7	41.17
11	21	25	4	19.04
12	20	20	0	0
13	11	17	6	54.54
14	20	24	4	20.00
15	13	17	4	30.76
16	21	23	2	9.52
17	12	19	7	58.33
18	13	22	9	69.23

Table IV Relationship Between Gains Shown in ESOL and Spanish S Grades			
Student	**% County Oral**	**% Michigan**	**Spanish S**
A	57.14	-	C
B	-	-	-
C	60.00	-	C
D	45.45	23.07	C
E	25.00	75.00	C
1	16.66	46.15	A
2	12.50	80.00	B
3	100.00	0.00	A
4	42.85	250.00	D
5	87.50	37.50	A
6	45.45	185.00	C
7	33.33	70.58	C
8	36.36	52.63	C
9	15.38	100.00	B
10	100.00	50.00	A
11	37.50	0.00	A
12	50.00	5.88	A
13	85.71	42.10	C
14	87.50	60.00	B
15	21.42	72.22	A
16	30.76	33.33	B
17	60.00	100.00	A
18	40.00	114.28	D

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Appendix A Letter to Parents

March 3, 1991

Dear Parents,

In our community the children that are learning English have few opportunities to practice and listen to it outside the ESOL classes.

This is the reason why I am contacting you in order to request your cooperation. We will be implementing various new activities in which your child will be assigned to watch selected TV programs and commercials in English as part of his/her homework. The following day the programs will be discussed and the new vocabulary and structures will be drilled.

Every Monday your child will take home a list of the programs to be watched during the week. You will be requested to sign the schedule on Fridays indicating that your son/daughter watched the assigned programs. He/she will return it to school on Mondays.

Please sign in order to give permission to your child to participate in these activities. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Yours,

Ofelia Stephens

Ofelia Stephens

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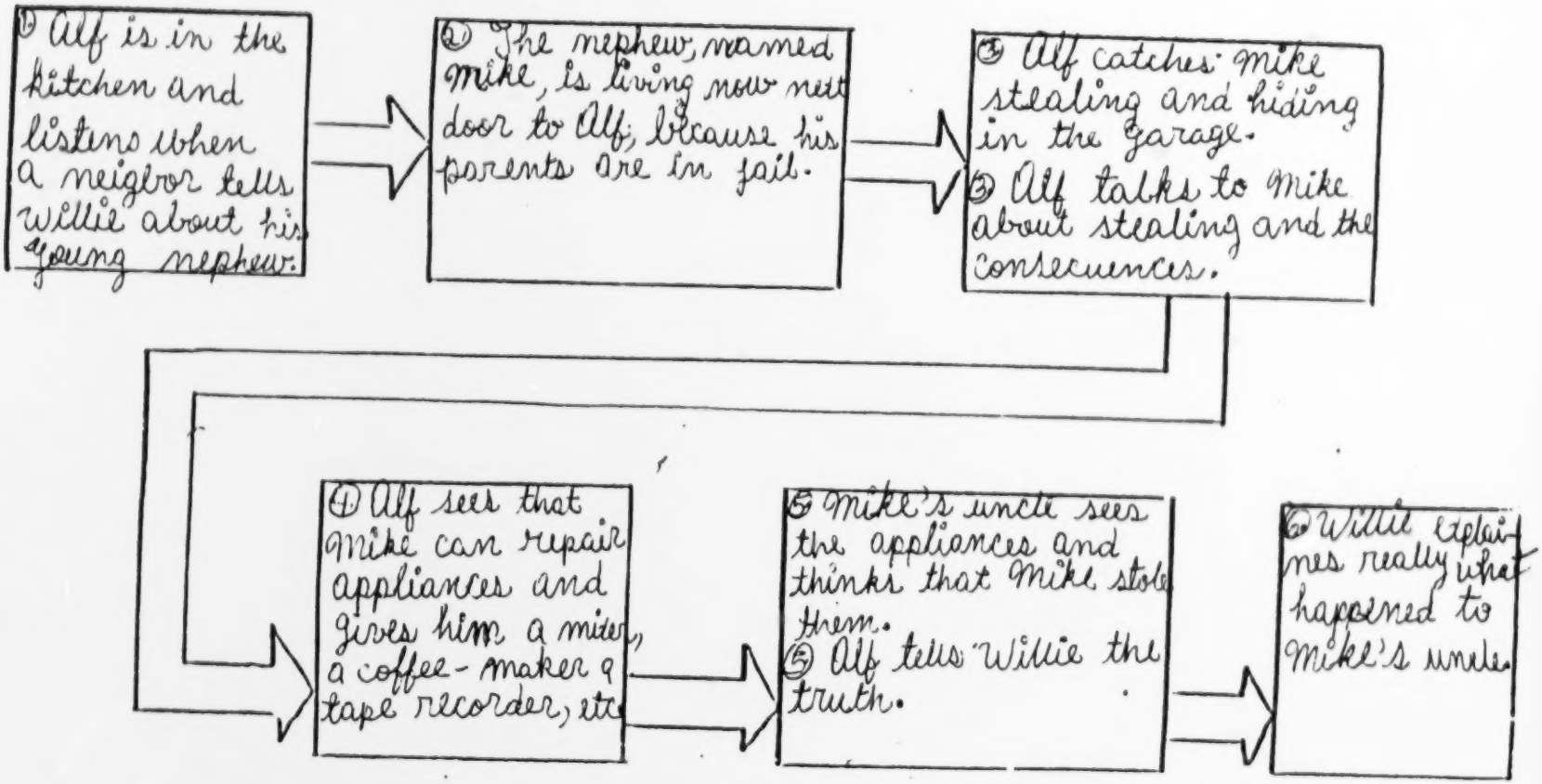
I have read the enclosed letter and I give permission for my child_____to participate in the new ESOL activities.

_____

Appendix B Sequence Chain

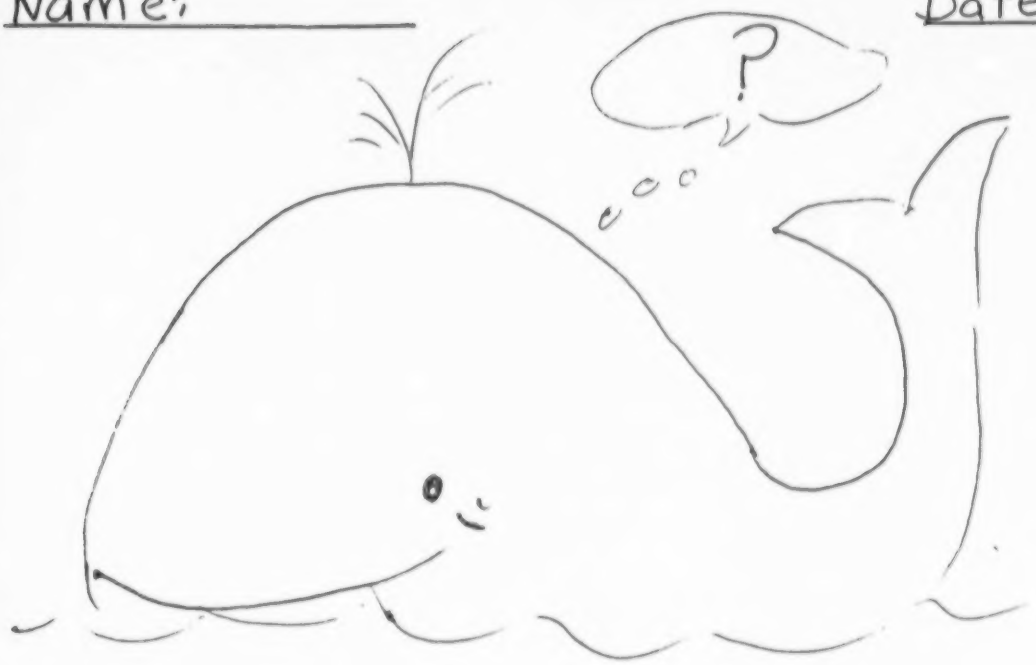
Alf

SEQUENCE CHAIN


① Alf is in the kitchen and listens when a neighbor tells Willie about his young nephew.
② The nephew, named Mike, is living now next door to Alf, because his parents are in jail.
③ Alf catches Mike stealing and hiding in the garage.
③ Alf talks to Mike about stealing and the consecuences.
④ Alf sees that Mike can repair appliances and gives him a mixer, a coffee-maker a tape recorder, etc.
⑤ Mike's uncle sees the appliances and thinks that Mike stole them.
⑤ Alf tells Willie the truth.
⑥ Willie explaines really what happened to Mike's uncle.

Appendix C Guess Which Program?

Name: _____ Date: _____



Guess Which Program?

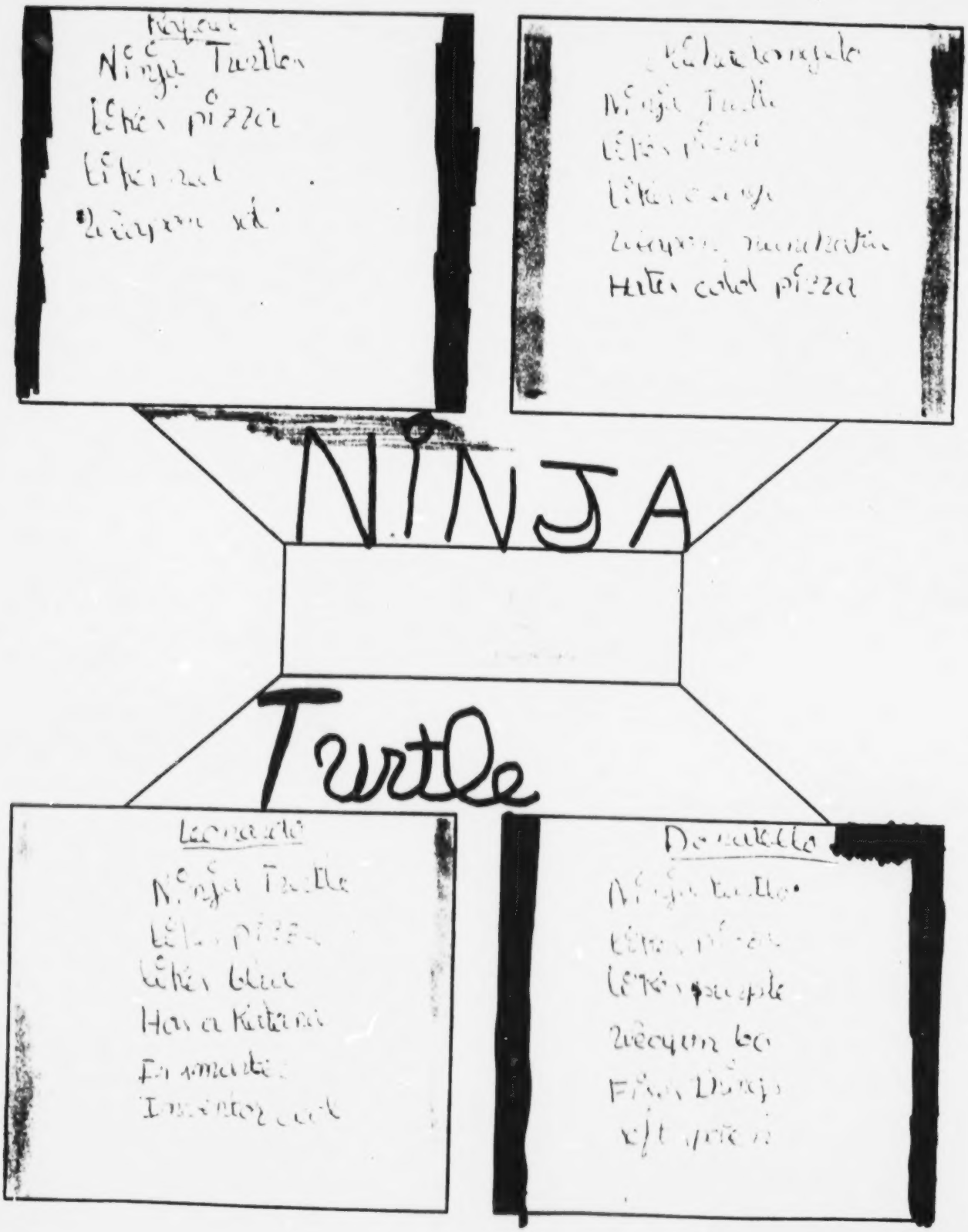
Choose three things that happened in a T.V program you watched this week. See if your classmates can guess which program it is.

① Their mother died in a car accident and their aunt came to take care of them.

② One of the brothers had to do an experiment. His brother took him to the girl's bathroom.

③ The aunt took care of the problem.

Appendix D Traits of the Turtles



Added D

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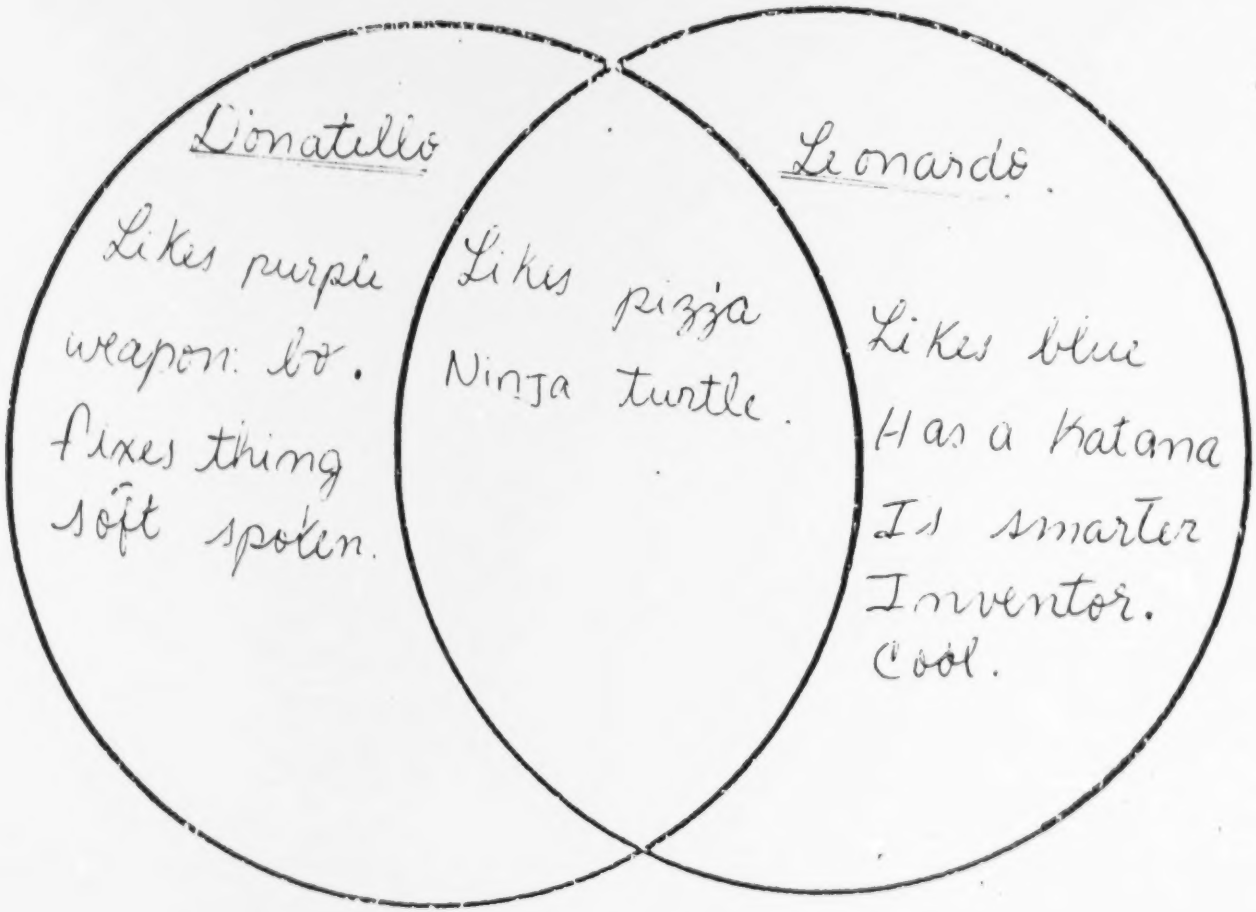
Appendix E Compare and Contrast

June 13, 1991

COMPARE and CONTRAST VENN DIAGRAM



Appendix E

Appendix F Cinquain

Name: _____ Date: _____

Cinquain

① girl

② pretty, tall

③ talks, looks, eats

④ work in TV News

⑤ April O'Neil

line 1: 1 noun
line 2: 2 adjectives
line 3: 3 verbs
line 4: 4 word phrase
line 5: a synonym for the title

Donatello

tall, green

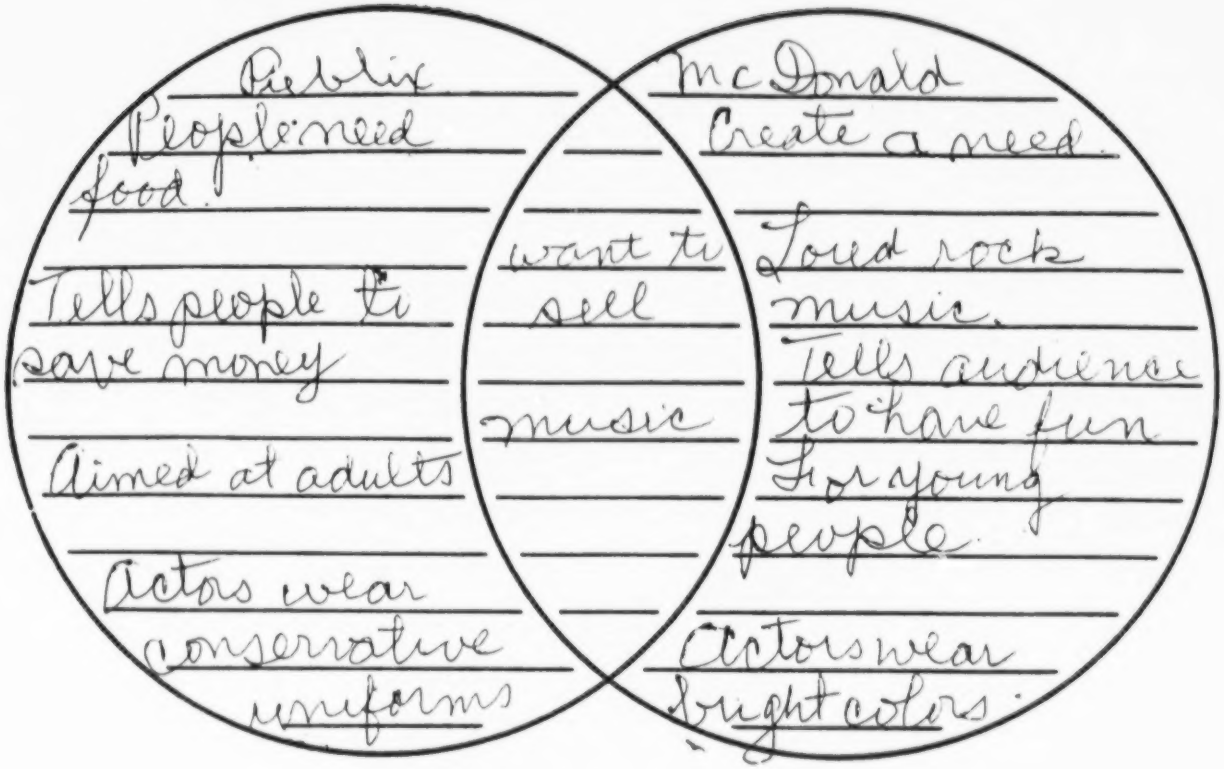
eats, jumps, plays

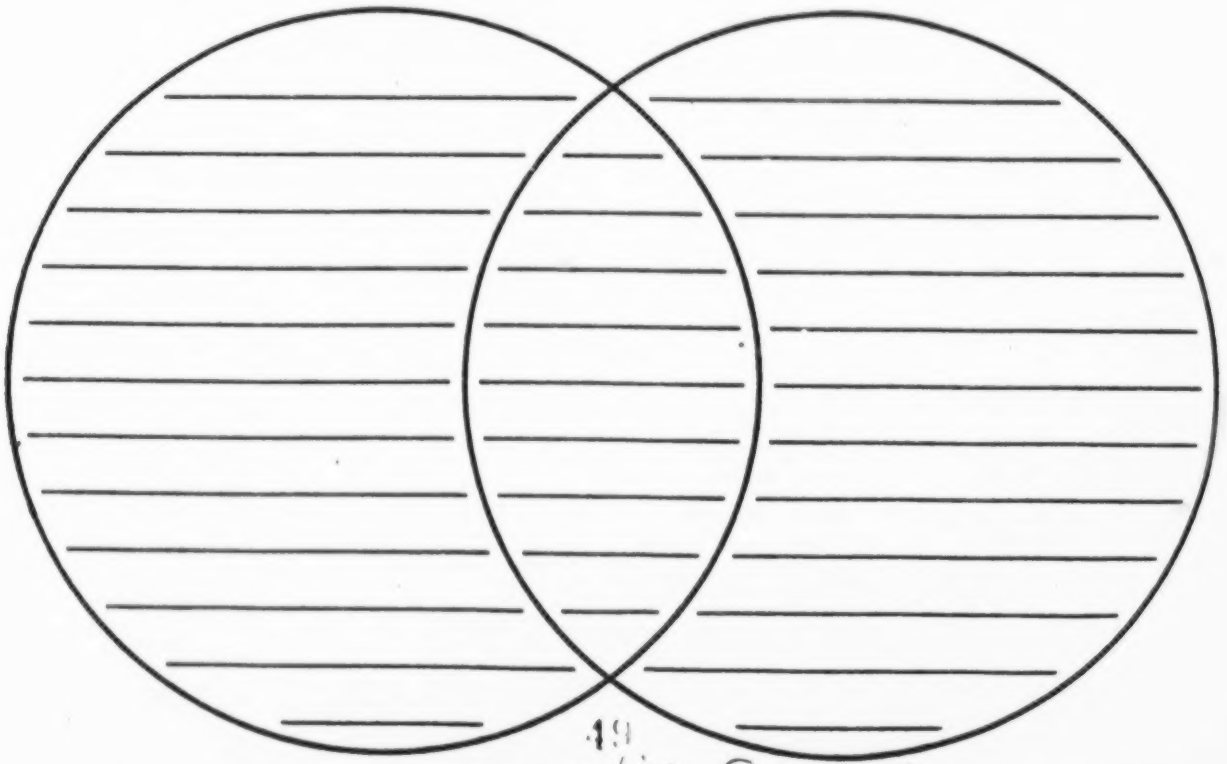
likes to eat pizza

Ninja Turtle

Appendix G Venn Diagrams (Commercials)

4. VENN DIAGRAM





Appendix G